A unified theory of positive social change: the enterprise, socio-spatial positionality, and scale

Toby Sola
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Introduction

How do you solve problems? Individuals answer this question differently. This is, after all, one of the beauties of being human; we get to debate the merits of say, Jill's solution over Jack's. Every once in while, however, you'll hear a solution that makes a lot of sense to you...

In this paper, I utilize Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT), New Social Movement (NSM) Theory, and framing in order to understand The Enterprise[1] (TE) as a Social Movement Organization (SMO). I then explore TE's diagnosis and subsequent solution to our world's problems; from fistfights to community feuds, from genocide to divorce, and even world war. I then relate TE's diagnosis/solution to the geographical concepts of scale and socio-spatial positionality (SSP) as presented in Helga Leitner's article, *The Spatialities of Contentious Politics.* Lastly, I present some of my own thoughts on these matters in relation to the future of meditative and social science inquiry.

In order to keep track of the many acronyms that I use,

keep this page with you as you read the rest of the paper.

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[1] Although many people think that long time meditators become 'selfless zombies', intense charisma, humor, and character are, in fact, more common effects of meditation practice (i.e. 'fully blooming selves' is what you end up seeing) (Young, 2012). The name, "The Enterprise" is a wonderful example of this phenomenon. Yes, the name is absolutely a reference to Star Trek's "The Starship Enterprise" (ibid.). And no, the name has nothing to do with sentiments of global domination.

Part I: background

Methods

The information about TE that will be presented in this paper was gathered through personal interviews with Todd Mertz (business manager), Shinzen Young (cofounder), Soryu Forall (cofounder), Stephanie Nash (senior facilitator), and Har-Prakash Khalsa (senior facilitator) (definitions of these roles will be given below). Two of TE's main publications were analyzed as well: *Five Ways to Know Yourself* (Young's mindfulness meditation manual) and *The Science of Enlightenment* (Young's audio lecture series).

My history with TE

A year-and-a-half ago, I told my aunt that I wanted to learn more about meditation. As she is an extraordinary and well-rounded psychologist, she had a great recommendation. She said, "oh Toby, you gotta check out this guy, Shinzen Young. He holds free monthly retreats in Waterbury, VT and his material is absolutely phenomenal!" I took my aunts advice, headed to Waterbury, and sure enough, I was blown away by Young's presentation of mindful awareness. It was non-dogmatic, comprehensive, and conceptually clear. This presentation inspired me to dive head first into mindfulness meditation and study, which led to further self directed studies of spirituality, psychology, religion, cognitive science, and other related fields. Today, I would consider my self quite knowledgeable about Young's conceptual framework and relatively experienced in mindfulness practice. I currently teach four mindfulness classes per week and plan on facilitating one of the

Waterbury, VT retreats that first introduced me to TE. I am in personal contact with most of TE's staff.

While this level of intimacy with TE is certainly a blessing (in that I am familiar with the organization's practices, conceptual framework, and structure), it can also be a curse (in that I can not help but express certain biases in my research). I have done my best to curb this bias.

Stylistic choices

In order to effectively convey TE's complex concepts, I often employ made-up examples and vignettes. Simply think of these as thought experiments. They are meant to get certain "gears" turning in the reader's mind; to ease their comprehension of admittedly irregular perspectives.

Also, Leitner says that,

Spacialities are co-implicated and co-constitutive in complex ways during social movement struggles... Those practicing contentious politics do not necessarily sit around discussing the merits of, say, mobilities versus place as domains of action. Rather, they draw on their experience and knowledge, crafting and intuiting strategies that they hope will succeed, and which simultaneously engage multiple spacialities (2008, 166).

During my research on TE, I discovered countless such co-constitutions and co-implications. What co-constitutions and co-implications mean for the reader is simple: Please read carefully; many of the ideas below are complex and abstract. Please read patiently; it is simply not possible for me to discuss all of the connections between ideas immediately as they arise (though I will attempt a coherent conceptual synthesis by the end!).

Situating TE within the humanist movement

TE's central ideas (which we will learn about below) align well with the central ideas of The Humanist Movement (HM). Therefore, we can rightly place TE within HM. HM began in Argentina in the late 1960s. Silo, the movement's founder, describes the central tenants in the following passage:

What ultimately defines this movement is not a certain political... or social action, or cultural activity–it is a set of ideas and the style of behavior. ...[First], it advocates placing the human being as the central value and concern, with nothing above the human being and no human being above any other. Secondly, this movement affirms the equality of all people, and therefore works to go beyond the mere formality of equal rights before the law, to advocate toward a world in which there is true equality of opportunity for all. Thirdly, it recognizes personal and cultural diversity, and therefore affirms the characteristics of all peoples and cultures, condemning all discrimination based on economic, racial, ethnic, and cultural differences. Fourth, it encourages any tendency that develops knowledge beyond the limitations imposed on thought by prejudices except his absolute or immutable truths. Fifth: it affirms the freedom of ideas and beliefs. And finally, it rejects all forms of violence, understanding that physical violence is not the only such expression, but that in addition, economic violence, racial violence, religious violence, as well as moral and psychological violence, are daily practices which have become deeply entrenched in every region of the planet (Silo in Udvarhelyi 2008, 151).

While HM has many other defining characteristics (Udvarhelyi, 152-156), the following aspect of the movement is especially relevant for our discussion of TE, "[HM does] not see individual development in isolation but as a necessary prerequisite and accompaniment of social change. Our focus on the individual cannot be confused with individualism" (ibid.). Here, we see two important ideas. First, HM not only *relates* "individual development" with social change, they see "individual development...as a necessary prerequisite and accompaniment of social change." In other words, if your goal is to *successfully* change society, you *must*

include the seemingly irrelevant tactic of individual development in your solution. Second, although HM emphasizes individual development, they are not so focused on this process that they reject the importance of working towards larger-scale, societal change (as seen in the distance Silo puts between HM and individualism). I will go into greater detail about both of these perspectives and explore the relationship between these perspectives, TE's conceptual framework, and the geographical concepts of scale and SSP below.

Part II: understanding TE using framing, RMT, and NSM

TE and framing

In order to understand the TE's central ideas, I will utilize framing. Benford and Snow (B&S) define frames in the following way:

Collective action frames are constructed in part as movement adherents negotiate a shared understanding of some problematic condition or situation they define as in need of change, make attributions regarding who or what is to blame, articulate an alternative set of arrangements, and urge others to act in concert to affect change (2000, 615).

B&S go on to introduce and define three types of frames that essentially summarize the above passage: diagnostic frame ('what is wrong' or 'what's the problem here'), prognostic frame ('what we're going to do' or 'how we're going to fix the problem'), and motivational frame ('the alternative imaginary' or 'what we're aiming for') (ibid). Motivational frames get their name from the fact that, if what you are aiming for is better than the current situation, one is 'motivated' to act. TE's frames can be summarized as:

Diagnostic Frame: High levels of worldwide suffering and low levels of worldwide fulfillment (Young, 2012). This is the result of insufficient materials, knowledge, action, mindfulness, wisdom, and morality (ibid.). Notice that insufficient mindfulness is not their full diagnosis. They *also* include insufficient wisdom, morality, materials, knowledge, and action. The later three (materials, knowledge, and action) are the social change tactics that most people are familiar with. These categories include: building a home for someone (material and action) or teaching someone how to farm sustainably (knowledge and action). *TE does not for a second dismiss these social change tactics as illegitimate* (ibid.). I will explain how TE deals with mindfulness, wisdom, and morality below.

Prognostic Frame: Develop and disseminate meditative exercises that increase people's level of mindfulness (ibid.). Collaborate with cognitive scientists and other specialists in order to ease the process of learning mindfulness (more detail

below)(ibid.). Develop and disseminate knowledge about how to run not-for-profit organizations (more detail below) (Forall, 2012).

Motivational Frame: A world with low levels of suffering and high levels of fulfillment, "the dawn of a new age" (Young 2011, 102).

TE as a SMO

According to Leitner, SMOs are involved in, "concerted, counter hegemonic social and political action, in which differently positioned participants come together to challenge dominant systems of authority, in order to promote and enact alternative imaginaries" (2008, 157). TE is concerted in that there are numerous organized groups of people involved in the movement (details below). TE's classification of mindfulness as a legitimate strategy with which to bring about social change is certainly counter hegemonic in that modern international social discourse has little room for such tactics (Forall, 2012). TE is involved in social action in that their strategies and goals are firmly grounded in social phenomena such as interpersonal relationships, community feuds, etc. (details far below). TE is involved in the promotion of an alternative imaginary in that they promote "the dawn of a new age" (Young 2011, 102). Although TE does not explicitly promote specific political opinions (Young, 2012), how can you achieve "the dawn of a new age" with out widespread and radical political changes? Hence, TE implies, perhaps quite indirectly, *revolutionary* political changes. Therefore, TE can be rightly classified as a SMO.

TE and RMT

TE is mainly comprised of three organizations that utilize Young's (who has

been teaching mindfulness meditation for 40 years) terminology, conceptual framework, teaching style, or meditative exercise directions. Table 1 shows essential aspects of the organizations that make up TE.

Table 1:

Organization	Brief description/offerings/sources of money	Staff/volunteers
VSI (Vipassana Support International) *Burlington, Ontario Canada*	A not-for-profit that offers weeklong and day long residential meditation retreats, four-hour phone-based meditation retreats, an on-going, once-a-month, phone-based mindfulness facilitator training program (i.e. participants can learn how to teach others mindfulness), 79 CDs/CD sets of guided meditations and lectures on specific topics, 20 hours of YouTube videos of Young's lectures and personal interviews with Young, free e-mail and home phone correspondence with Young, a free 180-page meditation manual, and a plethora of free online resources such as FAQs, charts/diagrams, readings, academic articles, reference materials, links to other organizations, poetry, and music (Mertz, 2012; Kahsla, 2012; VSI, 2012). VSI's senior facilitators (see staff section) have established numerous locally focused meditation classes, conferences, phone-based retreats, and blogs (while 26 such projects are listed on VSI's website, through personal correspondence and interviews, I've heard of countless other projects) (ibid.). VSI is also currently training a large number of non-senior facilitators (again, see staff section) who are teaching family and friends and establishing locally focused meditation classes, conferences, blogs, etc. (Mertz, 2012).

Collaborate with cognitive scientists and other specialists in order to (1) understand biological components of mindfulness practice and (2) develop 'technoboosts', devices "based in the physical sciences that would reliably accelerate the attainment of [mindfulness]" (Young 2012b).

Revenue is derived from phone-based retreat fees, "Dona" (donations for residential retreats and philanthropy), and CD sales. | Young – founder, visionary, main teacher (VSI, 2012)

Todd Mertz - business manager, only staff member in charge of coordinating all of the organizations that comprise TE (VSI, CML, and 0-1) (Young, 2012).

Choshin Vamplew – manager, organizes the vast majority of residential retreats (Young, 2012).

Emily Barret – secretary, organizes the vast majority of phone-based retreats, anything and everything that needs to get done (Mertz, 2012).

Senior facilitators – an extremely heterogeneous group of meditation teachers that have either studied with Young for a long time (some for 30 or 40 years) or have had significant experience with meditation prior to their introduction to VSI and simply 'learned fast' (Mertz, 2012). Senior facilitators have a broad set of complimenting interests, from Phd level cognitive science and physics research to Kundalini Yoga, from acting and music to geography (that's me!!; Nash, 2012). The only 'common denominator' between senior facilitators is that they have been greatly influenced by Young's work and thus have fun incorporating it in both large and small ways into their eclectic classes/projects. In general, senior facilitators are not paid by VSI. Instead, they either have arrangements with their local students or volunteer their time. There are many senior facilitators throughout North America, especially in southern CA (as Young began teaching in LA and regularly holds retreats in the area), Toronto, and Vermont (as Young regularly holds residential retreats in or near these locations). Senior Facilitators often teach/lead meditations during VSI's official retreat and class offerings (entire paragraph: ibid.)

Non-senior facilitators – an extremely heterogeneous group of meditators who have taken VSI's facilitator training classes (Mertz, 2012). Again, these facilitators have a broad set of interests and incorporate Young's concepts, meditation instructions, etc. into their facilitating to varying degrees and in different ways. These facilitators are not paid by VSI, instead, they either have arrangements with their local students or volunteer their time. Most live in North America but others live all over the world, from South America to the Middle East, from SE Asia to Europe (entire paragraph: ibid.). |
| **CML (The Center for Mindful Learning)** *Burlington, VT USA* | A not-for-profit organization founded in August of 2011 that has innovated VSIs teaching techniques and concepts in order to appeal to a broader range of participants (especially youth) (Forall, 2012). CML is working on a diverse array of projects:

Whole school mindfulness program - "the fastest and easiest way to bring mindfulness into your K-12 classroom. This innovative software introduces our | Soryu Forall – founder, visionary, main teacher.

Harrison Heyl – Executive director.

Lindsey Foreman and Sofi Dillof – teachers for the Whole Schools and Mind the Music programs.

Sabine Heggemann – teacher for the Whole Schools and Mind the Music programs in Luneburg, Germany.

Tedd Holtz – volunteer software engineer |

	happiness and success in school children. In only 5-minutes a day your students will: Learn a mindfulness skill. Practice a mindfulness technique. Interactively learn mindfulness vocabulary. Be set up to relate their mindfulness experience to the rest of their school day" (CML, 2011). Mind the music - "an innovative program for teaching mindfulness to youth through popular music…Music makes mindfulness fun and is an excellent vehicle for teaching [mindfulness]…Kids and teens like it!" (ibid.). Mind the music programs are held both during and after school on a smaller scale than the whole school mindfulness program. (ibid.) An intensive 8-week online/phone-based mindfulness facilitator training class (ibid.). A more thorough 5-month-long Burlington-based, in-person mindfulness facilitator class (ibid.). Modern Monastery (coming summer of 2013) - A residential monastery with two curriculum paths. One curriculum would be focused on mindfulness meditation. The other curriculum will be focused on training people in business skills and how to establish successful not-for-profit organizations (i.e. how to put your mindfulness to work in order to improve self and world!) (Forall, 2012). Sources of money: ~$50,000 in grants per year, fees charged for the implementation of the Whole Schools Mindfulness Program and the Mind the Music program, fees charged for the various facilitator training classes (CML, 2012), and philanthropy.	Facilitators – People who have taken CML's facilitator training classes. This group could be described the same way as VSI's non-senior facilitators (and, indeed, there is substantial overlap between these two groups) (Forall, 2012).
Zero-One expert systems *Burlington, VT USA*	A for-profit organization focused on the development of elaborate, automated, and interactive software capable of fulfilling a large part of the traditional role of a meditation teacher. Of course, Zero-One does not expect the software to fully replace the role of meditation teacher, but they do envision it taking care of many of the easy answers to common questions (which, in general, take up much of a meditation teacher's time) (Young 2012). As the software has not yet been released, Zero-One relies on a generous philanthropist for funding.	Young – founder, visionary (Mertz, 2012). Bill Koratos – software engineer (ibid.).

I will utilize RMT in order to fully understand the contents of table 1. RMT developed in the early 1970s to understand the emergence, functioning, and decline of a wave of SMOs that flooded Europe and North America during this time period (Ferree 1992, 29). McCarthy describes the central tenants of RMT in the following passage:

Several emphases are central to [RMT] as it has developed… [The] study of the aggregation of resources (money and labor) is crucial to an understanding of social activity…. [A]n explicit, if crude, supply and demand model is sometimes applied to the flow of resources toward and away from specific social movements. Finally, there is a sensitivity to the importance of costs and rewards in explaining individual and organizational involvement in social movement activity. (1972, 19)

How can we use RMT to help us summarize table 1? Well, we can say that their money comes from charging fees, donations/philanthropy, and grants and that labor comes from both paid staff and volunteers. Also, we can apply a crude supply and demand model to TE by saying people demand (and TE supplies) various forms of meditation instruction, facilitator training, and other relevant information/resources. Finally, we can say that participants are willing to pay fees or donate to TE because they value the "reward" of meditation experience and learning about related information/ideas.

However, such a resource-oriented analysis fails to reveal the entirety of TE. In order to explore TE in more detail, I will utilize NSM theory, which emerged in response to a wave of SMs that did not fit neatly into RMT and other theories (Larana 1995, 3). NSM theory simply seeks to identify common characteristics of SMOs that were part of this new wave (ibid.). I will mention characteristics that are most relevant to TE and present evidence of these traits within TE.

First, participants in NSMs often come from all social classes (i.e. people are not explicitly excluded from participation based upon their class) (ibid., 6). This is evident in TE's efforts to make their meditation classes and materials available to as many people as possible:

Table 2

Strategy	*Relatively* cheap phone-based and online classes (at least when compared to other organizations that teach meditation: $10-$20 classes compared to $1,000 retreats) (Mertz, 2012). A plethora of free online resources (Refer to Table 1).	CML's Mind the Music after school programs and Whole School Mindfulness Programs are free for the youth participants (Forall, 2012).	Young's meditation manual has bee translated into German (Mertz, 2012). Spanish, Portuguese, and Chinese translations are in the process (ibid.)	The Big Picture (Figure 1) displays the main ideas of TE using only symbols.
Results	Participants don't have to have lots of money to learn a lot (Young, 2012). Participants don't have to leave their home if sick, old, or have kids in order to learn a lot (ibid.). An anecdotal account: I am currently teaching meditation to a young man from Israel via Skype. During our first discussion, I was blown away by the amount of information that he had already picked up from YouTube videos and a few phone-based classes.	Mindfulness training is made easily available to an entire community-worth of youth.	Participants don't have to know English in order to read the manual.	Participants don't have to be literate period to learn about TE.

Figure 1

Please refer to separate 'Figure 1' document.

Second, as opposed to being authoritarian, NSMs are often diffuse, non-hierarchical and decentralized (Larana 1995, 8-9). TE displays this characteristic through its vast geographic reach and especially in the fact that one of TE's main projects is the training of facilitators that TE then maintains little control over (refer to table 1). Adherents can learn Young's system of meditation exercises, take part in facilitator trainings, and begin teaching mindfulness in their communities in their own way. They may incorporate it into their Yoga classes, start an after school program at the local middle school, or simply teach their family an exercise while on a group walk. This mode of conceptual and exercise dissemination is quite diffuse and certainly not centralized or tightly controlled.

A wonderful display of TE's non-hierarchical structure is seen in TE's online facilitator forum. Anyone who has taken a facilitator training course gets access to this forum and discussion sections include: "Announcements from other facilitators," "Ask and respond to questions about teaching," "How would you answer this question?" "Sharing teaching experiences," and "Sharing resources" (BM, 2012b). This forum provides a safe and convenient space for facilitators to literally teach each other and is thus a great example of a non-hierarchical organizational structure.

Third, participation in NSMs often involves the creation of new identities, belongings, values, and meanings or supporting previously marginalized ones (Larana 1994, 7). TE fits this bill, but perhaps not in a way you would expect. First, let's consider Young's description of a meditative exercise known as "Just Note Gone: Work with vanishings" (Young, 2011, 95). The exercise is based upon the

following traditional practices/understandings:

Buddhaghosa's Path of Purification
Raja Yoga: Nirodha
Jewish Kabbalah: Bittul Ha-yesh
Islamic Sufism: Fana (Young 2011, 148)

The directions for the exercise are simple:

Whenever all or part of [a sensory experience, i.e. sights, sounds, body sensations, metal talk, etc.] drops away or drops off, not "Gone." The thing that drops away or drops off may be well defined or vague, big or small, simple or complex. It may be something that has lasted a long time or something fleeting. In some cases, you may not even know what it is that vanished!

If nothing drops away or drops off for a while, just hang out until something does. If you have any reaction to the absence of "Gone," that reaction won't last long. When it drops away, not "Gone." (Young 2011, 99).

Young goes on to describe a possible experience that this practice can produce:

As you become more sensitive to detecting Gone, you may come to a place where you notice it so frequently that Goneness itself becomes an object of high concentration. The gaps between the "Gones" get shorter and shorter until a figure-ground reversal takes place. Gone becomes the abiding ground. Self and world become fleeting figures. Needless to say, experiencing something like this during your life will have a huge impact on how you relate to your death.

As you come to know the Source of your own consciousness, you also come to know the Source of everyone's consciousness–the shared Formless Womb of creation. Someone with whom you share a womb is referred to as a brother or sister. So noting Gone can lead to a spontaneous sense of oneness with and commitment to all of humanity (Young 2011, 97).

In this passage, the practitioner becomes more identified with the experience

of "Gones"/"the source of your consciousness"/"the source of everyone's

consciousness"/"the Formless Womb of creation" and less identified with self and

world (as they become "fleeting figures"). One can view this experience/transition

as a radical, perhaps the ultimate, shift in one's identity and sense of belonging. TE

therefore prominently displays this common feature of NSMs, yet in an admittedly unique way. I will return to this shift in identity after exploring some of TE's ideas in relation to the geographical concepts of SSP and scale, which is where I will turn to next.

Part III: TE and SSP

Defining SSP

In feminist theory, positionality refers to a social subject's coordinates in regards to gender, sexuality, race, class, etc. (Leitner 2008, 163). However, Leitner gives us various other, more detailed, nuanced, and therefore functional sub-definitions of SSP. In this paper, I will focus on three of Leitner's sub-definitions, which he conveys in the following passage:

Positionality means, first, that differently positioned subjects have distinct identities, experiences and perspectives, shaping their understanding of and engagement with the world – subjectivities, imaginaries, interests and knowledge. It frames their ontological and epistemological stance, the starting point for action…. unequal power relations are part and parcel of positionality: it is not that feminine, for example, emerges through its relations with masculine, but that the latter often dominates the former. Thus positionality is simultaneously about difference and inequality – while calling into question the generality and normative function of any positionality…Finally, socio-spatial positionality is not fixed. It is reenacted on a daily basis, in ways that simultaneously reproduce and challenge positionalities (ibid.).

Leitner says three things about SSP: (1) a subject's SSP includes how they understand and engage with the world, (2) SSP and inequality are inextricable, and (3) SSP is not fixed. Throughout the next ten or so pages, I will explore the ways in which Leitner's three points relate to TE's conceptual framework. In order to understand this discussion of SSP and TE, I need to give the reader at least a brief, simple definition of scale (gotta love those co-implications!).

In the context of SMs, Leitner says, "scale is invoked as an indication of the geographical extent, or scope, of a political practice - distinguishing, for example, between global, national and local social movements" (ibid.). This definition of scale evokes abstract *concentric* spaces: local scales make up national scales, which make up global scales. Running with this concentric conception of space, one can say that the local is made up of families, which are made up of inter-personal relationships,

which are made up of individuals, which are made up of *sensory experiences* (although there are obviously an infinite number of ways to slice this pie) (Mertz, 2012). Geographers and most people are comfortable talking about the scale of the individual, but sensory experience?? This deserves further attention.

At any moment, you, reader, are composed of one or a combination of the sensory experiences laid out in Table 3:

	In	Out
See	Mental image	External sight
Hear	Mental talk	External sound
Feel	Emotional body sensation	Physical body sensation

(Young 2011, 91)

For example, you may be talking to yourself (hear in), looking at a piece of art (see out) and feeling hungry (feel out). Or, you may be feeling jittery in your body because you are about to see an old friend (feel in), listening to the radio (hear out), and picturing a mental image of a map as you drive (see in). Although it might be strange to consider, *these sensory experiences are occurring in real, definable spaces* (Young, 2012). For example, a body sensation might move from the outside of your forearm to the inside of your forearm, most people's mental talk occurs somewhere between their ears and underneath their hair or around their throat, sounds emanate from specific locations, you can see how much space exists between you and an object, etc. These sensory experiences are occurring at a small geographic scale - reasonable units of measure might include feet, inches, or even cm. These sensory experiences are also occurring within short periods of time - reasonable units of measure might include minutes, seconds, or even half-seconds. Such 'small-

spatial and short-temporal collages of sensory experience' produce our second-by-second conceptions of the material world (see, hear, feel x out) and our second-by-second understandings of our selves (see, hear, feel x in) (Young, 2012). For example, if you are able to perceive that your friend's voice is soft, you understand that your friend is far away. The sensory experience of a soft sound allows you to *understand something about the world* (the fact that your friend is far away) (Mertz, 2012). This beautifully fits with half of Leitner's definition of SSP. Again, he says "subjects have distinct identities, experiences and perspectives, shaping their understanding of and engagement with the world…" (2005, 163). Wow! One could say that a subject's second-by-second collage of sensory experience is a real time feed of their *understanding* of self and world; it is their SSP at incredibly 'short time' and 'small space' scales; it is their 'mini-SSP'. We can therefore equate the following terms:

Mini-SSP = short time/small space understandings of self and world

I will, from now on, use the above terms interchangeably. But Toby! You forgot about an important word in Leitner's definition of SSP! He says, "subjects have distinct identities, experiences and perspectives, shaping their understanding of and *engagement* with the world" (ibid., my italics). In order to understand how TE incorporates engagement into their conception of SSP, I must first define two terms: mindfulness, and wisdom and morality (as one concept).

According to TE, a person is being mindful of a sensory experience (a mini-

SSP!) when they are utilizing two attentional skills, which each have two sub-components (Young 2011, 7):

Focus:
1. Concentration - your ability to remain focused on what you deem relevant at any given time (Forall, 2012).
2. Clarity - your ability to accurately perceive what is going on within a sensory experience, "increased sensory resolution power" (Young 2011, 135).

Open:
1. Arise - your ability to let sensory experience arise without push or pull (Forall, 2012).
2. Pass - your ability to let sensory experience pass without push or pull (ibid.).

While concentration and open are, at least conceptually, easy to understand, clarity deserves further explanation. Let's look at an example: If you are relating *clearly* to the plethora of warm body sensations that often accompanies close proximity to a hearth, you know what's 'going on' in regards to the warmth: You know what mini-sensations make up the warmth. You know whether or not the warmth is spreading or shrinking in size; whether or not the warmth is getting more intense or less intense; whether or not it is changing or stable; if the warmth is changing, you know exactly how its changing, the warmth might be flowing, moving, vibrating, etc. So what's the point of these attentional skills, anyways? The answer to this question is most easily conveyed through a true, mildly funny, yet powerful vignette.

One evening, as I sat at my desk waiting for a response to a text message I had recently sent to my latest crush, an intense, uncomfortable ball of anxiety arose in my gut. At first, I hated the fact that I was experiencing visceral, uncomfortable anxiety and I therefore resisted this arising (i.e. I was not utilizing 'arise'). The uncomfortable aspect of the anxiety ball made me hesitant to explore the sensations that comprised

the ball (i.e. I was not utilizing 'clarity'). Since the ball of anxiety created stressful thoughts and feelings, my mind became racy and distracted (i.e. I was not utilizing 'concentration') (refer to above definitions). In summary, I was not experiencing my anxiety in a mindful fashion. I was gut deep in suffering, no fun. Then, however, I remembered some of Young's ideas about how helpful mindfulness can be in such suffering-laden situations. As I had been meditating daily (and I was thus familiar with how to employ a mindful perspective), I went ahead and gave it a shot. I chose the ball of anxiety as my object of mediation (a feel-in) and dove in. My concentration allowed me to focus on the ball of anxiety. My open (specifically my arise) allowed me to, in a meaningful way, let the anxiety be there. My clarity allowed me to explore the micro-sensations that made up the ball. As I explored the micro-sensations, I discovered waves of movement, tingling, and a sort of contractive energy. "Wow!" I said to myself, "this isn't just a horrible blob of anxiety, there's all sorts of stuff going on here, heck, this is actually quite interesting!" Realizing the prevalence of interesting micro-sensations immediately reduced the amount of suffering that I was experiencing by about 25%. This made me smile.

What do we learn about TE's ideas in this vignette? According to TE, pain and suffering are not one and the same (although they *are* closely related) (Young 2011, 118). Pain is seen as an objective reality, a kind of initial input, while suffering is a subjective reality that, admittedly, has a lot to do pain levels. One can use mindfulness to decrease the amount of suffering an initial pain causes. Similarly, pleasure is an objective reality, a kind of initial input, while fulfillment is a subjective reality that, admittedly, has a lot to do with levels of pleasure. One can use mindfulness to increase the amount of fulfillment derived from an initial pleasure (ibid.). One can summarize these relationships using the following formulas:

Equations 1 and 2:

Suffering = Pain/Mindfulness
Fulfillment = Pleasure x Mindfulness (ibid.)

How do these relationships apply to the vignette above? Well, given the constant ball of anxiety (the initial pain input), when I related to this experience

unmindfully, I experienced high levels of suffering. However, when I related to this experience mindfully, I experienced low levels of suffering.

Now that we understand what mindfulness is, let us define wisdom and morality. First of all, TE certainly conceives of wisdom and morality as separate concepts. So why have I chosen to clump these ideas into one term for this discussion? Simplicity's sake, ease of reader comprehension, pragmatism, that's all. I could absolutely spend page after page discussing whether getting your driver's license renewed so you can make it to work and support your family is a moral act or an expression of wisdom. However, in my opinion, the line between wisdom and morality is quite blurry and regardless, such debate is not directly relevant to this conversation.

According to TE, wisdom and morality can have different meanings in different contexts. One way that TE defines wisdom and morality is: knowing when to 'just use mindfulness' and knowing when to 'use mindfulness *and* take objective action' (Forall, 2012). Notice that in both options, you use mindfulness and what is different is whether or not you take objective action. In order to get a sense of TE's conception of wisdom and morality, let's look at two examples.

Example one: you stub your toe. Example two: you are a child who is getting sexually abused by your father. In both situations using mindfulness will reduce your suffering (refer to equations 1 and 2). When you stub your toe, is it moral and wise to immediately go to the ER and get your toe X-rayed to make sure it's not broken? This is, after all, an objective action that could reduce your suffering. Yet is it moral and wise? Probably not. However, if you are a child and are getting

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sexually abused by your father, is it moral and wise to talk with your school councilor? This is, after all, an objective action that could reduce your suffering. Yet is it moral and wise? Hells yes! Always and only relying on mindfulness to decrease your suffering is absolutely insufficient (Mertz, 2012)[2].

Uh oh. Toby's talking about wisdom and morality, that's like pretty much the most debatable, sensitive stuff in human history.   Is he gonna start making condescending statements?!   Doesn't wisdom and morality vary across time and space (Leitner 2008, 163)?!

The universalist vs relativist debate is far beyond the scope of this paper, so I will solely relate this discussion to TE's views.   TE is absolutely aware of and respects variation in wisdom and morality (Young, 2012). TE is not at all interested in the development of some kind of 'universally and eternally applicable mindful wisdom and morality' (ibid.). Instead, TE suggests that adherents look toward their "cultures and their conscious" for wisdom and moral direction (ibid.).   However, when pressed for at least an elementary position on wisdom and morality, both Young and Forall denounced murder, stealing, lying, and non-consensual sex (2012). I would therefore place TE right smack in the middle of the universalist-relativist spectrum. They understand the reality of variation yet do not discount the value of certain inalienable rules. So how does one develop wisdom and morality?

According to TE, wisdom and morality is gained through student-teacher interaction and *not directly from practicing mindfulness* (Mertz, 2012). Teachers can come in all forms (Forall, 2012), from a priest who convinces you that using

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[2] How might this sentence illuminate a deeper understanding of the 'open' skill discussed above?

mindfulness to withstand an abusive relationship is *unwise and immoral,* to an older sister who convinces you that using mindfulness to focus on your homework *is* wise and moral.

Another relevant aspect of TE's conception of wisdom and morality is their emphasis on 'actually using mindfulness during real situations' (Mertz, 2012). In other words, after developing your attentional skills through mindfulness practice, don't forget about them when you are washing the dishes, conversing, or, perhaps most importantly, when you are having an argument. The importance TE ascribes to this facet of wisdom and morality is elegantly conveyed in one of their slogans, "Express Enlightenment" (ibid.). In this slogan, 'enlightenment' is simply being used as a synonym for mindfulness. Again, teachers can come in all forms, from a friend convincing you that using mindfulness to clean the dishes is *moral and wise* to a coach convincing you that *intentionally* spacing out (i.e. not being mindful) while playing goalie for a tight-nit soccer team on a winning steak is *immoral and unwise*.

Now that we understand TE's definition of mindfulness and the relevant facets of their definition of wisdom and morality, we can dive into the juiciest of questions: How can mindfulness, wisdom, and morality influence how a subject *engages* with the world? In order to understand TE's thoughts on this matter, we will return to our vignette. When we left off last time, Toby had just reduced his anxiety-induced suffering by relating to the anxiety mindfully.

My mom then entered my room and asked me if I wanted to join her for dinner. Because I was anxious, I wanted to respond with a harsh "No!" Yet, upon moral and wise reflection, I knew that saying this to my mother, who had nothing to do with my anxiety, was unacceptable. But should I do it anyway?? I'm really anxious!! Everything that I do right now should reflect my penetrating anxiety!!

At the end of the day, you'll be happy to hear, I responded to my mom very sweetly. However, TE would say that I acted in this way not because I wanted to, not because my mini-SSP made it easy for me to do so (Mertz, 2012). In order to understand why I acted the way I did, we need to take a close look at *the complex web of mini-SSPs that were at play during this episode*. What mini-SSP were present when my mom asked me about dinner? There were three. (1) My tense relationship with a girl created a sense of anxiety, so we could say that an 'anxiety mini-SSP' existed. (2) As far as I know, my mom wasn't feeling particularly strong about anything so we could say that a 'business as usual mini-SSP' existed. (3) Importantly, my sense of wisdom and morality allowed me to empathize with my mother's 'business as usual mini-SSP,' so we can say that an 'empathy mini-SSP' also existed. In summary, within Toby there existed an 'anxiety mini-SSP' and an 'empathy mini-SSP' and within my mother, there existed a 'business as usual mini-SSP.' As anxiety can be a powerful and overwhelming experience, I was certainly tempted to base the response to my mother's question on my 'anxiety mini-SSP.' However, when I used mindfulness to decrease the amount of suffering that the anxiety caused, I was less overwhelmed by the anxiety and therefore less subject to the gravitational pull of the anxiety; I was no longer forced to act from a place of anxiety; I wasn't 'stuck' to my 'anxiety mini-SSP', I could *detach*. After detaching, I was able to ground my self in my 'empathy mini-SSP' and intentionally base the response to my mom's question from this position. *Mindfulness therefore allowed me to choose which mini-SSP would influence my action; it allowed me to choose how to engage with the world. Wisdom and morality provided me with an alternative mini-*

SSP to attach to (ibid.)

Sadly, most people don't have the ability to choose (ibid.). If they are anxious, they have trouble detaching from their anxiety and attaching to a mini-SSP derived from morality and wisdom. Mindfulness allows people to detach from unwise and immoral mini-SSPs. Just because you're anxious doesn't mean that you have to be subject to that anxiety. In deed, you can detach from it and then attach to a mini-SSP that better aligns with your sense of morality and wisdom (ibid.).

This discussion of TE's ideas relates to Leitner in two ways. First, we can see how TE conceives of SSP not only as an understanding but also as an *engagement* with the world. In the vignette, I not only understood mini-SSPs, I *acted* upon them (in that I responded to my mother's question).

Leitner also says that SSP means "calling into question the generality and normative function of any positionality" (2005, 169). Wow. That's *exactly* what TE's conceptualization of mindfulness, wisdom, and morality **(mind-more-wise!)** allows you to do. If an experience (mini-SSP) of anxiety arises, you immediately call it into question and, if you deem the anxiety unacceptable, you can detach. *One can therefore think of being mindful, wise, and moral as a deep realization of the equality of all SSPs* (Mertz, 2012). Yeah, my mini-SSP is dominated by anxiety right now, but my mini-SSP isn't the only mini-SSP in the world; morality and wisdom legitimize my mom's mini-SSP as well. All mini-SSP are created equal! Mind-more-wise allows a subject to see that their frustration is no more important than another's calm. Mind-more-wise then enables a subject to act in a way that reflects this knowledge (ibid.).

The following questions naturally arise: does, over time, practicing such intentional detachment and reattachment begin to improve one's ability to detach and reattach in the future? Even more interesting, can mindfulness improve one's ability to attach to SSPs grounded in wisdom and morality? The answer to both of these questions is yes (Young, 2012). Not only is this known subjectively (through meditator's self reports), it is beginning to be proven objectively with modern neuroscience (Lazar, 2005; Bates, 2012).

How does this discussion relate to Leitner? Well, Leitner says SSP is not fixed; it changes over time (2005, 169). One can think of TE's conceptualization of mind-more-wise allowing people to intentionally adjust their mini-SSP, and even their SSP, as yet another *deep* realization of one of Leitner's concepts.

It is clear that having the ability to choose between SSPs can become a long-standing pattern in one's personality; one could say it could become a personality trait or a full-blown SSP. As long as you are employing morality and wisdom, this can be a very helpful SSP for both you and the world (as it allows you to respond to situations with a greater sense of morality and wisdom) (Mertz, 2012). However, it is still a personality trait, and is therefore subject to the same dangers any personality trait brings up. Some meditators begin to define too much of their personality by this ability; they love the fact that they have this ability and begin to look down upon others who don't possess this ability (ibid.). TE, and many others, refer to this phenomenon as 'spiritual materialism' (Young, 2005; Trungpa, 2008). To over simplify, regular materialism involves the flaunting of red sports cars, large houses, and hot wives. Similarly, spiritual materialism involves the flaunting of

friendship with meditation teachers, psychic powers, the ability to choose between mini-SSPs, etc. Spiritual materialism, then, looks nothing like being able to call "into question the generality and normative function of any positionality" (Leitner 2005, 163). What turns a tool that weakens one's enslavement to their SSP into a tool that strengthens it? All sorts of stuff: ego, power, money, jealousy, emotional baggage, etc. (Mertz, 2012; Trungpa, 2008). What in TE's conceptual framework prevents spiritual materialism from running rampant? Wisdom and morality (Mertz, 2012). Once again, *mindfulness is not the entirety of their prescription.*

To summarize what we've discussed so far: TE's conceptual framework for how to use mind-more-wise to adjust which mini-SSP from which you act exemplifies a *deep and powerful* realization of Leitner's equal SSPs (Mertz, 2012). TE's conceptualization of mind-more-wise allowing people to intentionally and positively adjust their mini-SSP, and even their SSP, demonstrates a *deep* realization of Leitner's changing SSPs (ibid.). Understanding how TE engages SSP will allow us to understand how TE conceives of the geographical concept of scale, which is where we will turn next.

Part IV: TE and scale

To review: Leitner defined scale as concentric spaces ranging from the local, to the national to the global (2007, 161). Running with this train of thought, I added three finer scales: interpersonal relationship, the individual, and sensory experience. Let's take a second look at how mind-more-wise can be used to affect change at the scale of the individual. Well, we know three things:

Suffering = pain / mindfulness
Fulfillment = pleasure x mindfulness
(Young 2001, 118)
These equations only function properly if you develop wisdom and morality.
(Mertz, 2012)

Therefore, mind-more-wise can be used to increase fulfillment and decrease suffering at the scale of the individual (ibid.). Interesting. What about using mind-more-wise to affect change at the next largest scale, interpersonal relationships? Well, what affect did mind-more-wise have on the interaction I had with my mother? It decreased inter-personal friction (in that I refrained from responding to her question rudely) and increased inter-personal friendship (in that I responded sweetly). To put this relationship between mind-more-wise and levels of friction/friendship into theoretical terms:

Equation #3:

Interpersonal interaction + high levels of mind-more-wise = low levels of friction and high levels of friendship.
 (Mertz, 2012)

The equation above provides the all-important conceptual framework

necessary to use mind-more-wise (processes that occur at the scale of individuals and sensory experience) to affect change at larger geographic scales. This is because, in the equation, we see mind-more-wise improving *interpersonal relationships.* As interpersonal relationships are the basic building blocks of families, and families are the basic building blocks of communities, and communities are the basic building blocks of states, and states are the basic building blocks of the entire world, mind-more-wise can be used to radically transform the world (Young, 2005; Denis, 2011). TE's conceptualization of mind-more-wise is thus inherently 'scalar' in nature. This is most succinctly summarized by Young's well-known slogan, "improve self and world" (Young 2012). This slogan conveys a complex scalar conceptual framework that promotes the use of mind-more-wise as a legitimate tactic in the pursuit of affecting large-scale, global change. TE is therefore taking the following words of Miller to the ultimate extreme, "the actions of social movements…reverberate across geographical scales" (2000, 33).

This radical 're-aiming' of tactical energy can, in fact, be thought of as a critique of popular scalar discourse. Leitner describes the central tenets of popular scalar discourse in the following passage:

The vertically entailed in any nested set of territorially bounded political entities can be suggestive of hierarchical power relations… scales are often conceptualized in exactly this way. According to what is known as hierarchy theory, broader scales shape conditions of possibility of local scales (2007, 161).

According to Leitner, many theorists view small scales as being controlled by larger scales, unable to exert any force of change in the opposite direction. Leitner

goes on to say:

Such a top down power hierarchy has been roundly and appropriately criticized by feminist and poststructuralist theorists for its neglect of the potential transformative power of the local. It is important to remember that many scale theorists reject the assumption that scalar power operates through a top-down hierarchy. Power hierarchies always exist, with dominant, nodal and marginal scales, but the largest scales need not dominate (ibid.)

Many scale theorists reject the idea that larger scales exert total control over smaller scales, and, in fact, they support the possibility of smaller scales exerting control over larger scales ("the largest scales need not dominate"). Similar scale/power arguments are put forward by Udvarhelyi and Naga (2008, 153), Miller (2000, 5), Harvey (2000, 51), and Hyndman (2004, 308).

The redistribution of power among scales is exactly what TE is engaged in with their scalar conception of mind-more-wise. Just as "feminist geo-politics…attempts to develop a politics of security at the scale of (civilian) body" (Hyndman 2004, 309), TE attempts to develop the production of social change at the scale of the individual. Such assertions remove 'the power to affect global change' from geographically large institutions that have historically held vast amounts of power and respect (states, the UN, etc.) and place such power and respect in the hands of individuals cultivating *and expressing* mind-more-wise. TE's scalar thinking effectively opens up and legitimizes entirely new scales where social change tactics can be deployed (the scales of sensory experience and individual bodies). Because this involves the redistribution of power across scales, TE is engaged in a powerful critique of popular scalar discourse. As Leitner says,

Actors strategically engage with [scale] in order to legitimize or challenge existing power relations. In the course of the struggles new scales are constructed, and the relative importance of different scales is reconfigured (2007, 159).

Yet, as TE is part of the Humanist Movement (HM), TE doesn't just say that mind-more-wise is a legitimate tactic that *can* be used to affect global change, TE says that mind-more-wise is a tactic that *must* be used in order to affect global change (Young 2005). In order to understand why, let's take a second look at TE's diagnostic frame:

Diagnostic Frame: High levels of worldwide suffering and low levels of worldwide fulfillment (Young, 2012). This is the result of insufficient materials, knowledge, action, mindfulness, wisdom, and morality (ibid.). Notice that insufficient mindfulness is not their full diagnosis...

And a made-up, extremely simple, yet powerful vignette to help us understand TE's diagnosis:

Meet John. John has low levels of mind-more-wise. John gets punched in the face. The physical pain of his throbbing head triggers the emotional pain of frustration; a 'frustration mini-SSP' arises. Because John is unable to relate to his 'frustration mini-SSP' mindfully, it causes him lots of suffering (refer to equations 1 and 2). Because John's 'frustration mini-SSP' causes him lots of suffering, his frustration overwhelms him and he has trouble detaching from this mini-SSP. Because John has low levels of morality and wisdom, no other alternative mini-SSP arise in his awareness. John therefore has no choice but to base his response to the punch off of his overwhelming 'frustration mini-SSP.' John punches back.

In this vignette, we see a pattern. *Specifically, we see suffering (the result of low levels of mindfulness) and a lack of alternative mini-SSPs (the result of low levels of wisdom and morality) negatively skewing an action.* Would John have punched back if he engaged mind-more-wise? Probably not. Low levels of mind-more-wise forced John to base his response on a mini-SSP that was saturated with suffering and had little to do with wisdom and morality; *low levels of mind-more-wise negatively*

skewed his action.

To put these relationships into theoretical terms:

Equation #4:

Inter personal interaction + low levels of mind-more-wise = high levels of friction
and low levels of friendship
(Mertz, 2012)

The above equation is the logical opposite of equation #3. Similar to equation

#3 (which allowed us to use mind-more-wise to affect change at large geographic

scales), equation #4 allows us to say that the causes of large-scale problems exist at

small time/space scales.   This is because, in equation #4, we see mind-more-wise

worsening *interpersonal relationships.* As interpersonal relationships are the basic

building blocks of families, and families are the basic building blocks of

communities, and communities are the basic building blocks of states, and states are

the basic building blocks of the entire world, we can rightly say that low levels of

mind-more-wise accounts for all small, medium, and large-scale problems[3] (Young,

2005; Denis, 2011). According to TE, medium scale problems such as divorce and

community feuds are the result of thousands, perhaps millions of *negatively skewed*

interactions. Large-scale problems such as genocide and world war are the result of

billions of *negatively skewed interactions.*   Again, interactions are skewed by

suffering and a lack of available alternative mini-SSPs (which are the results of low

levels of mind-more-wise).   Low levels of mind-more-wise is thus the root of all

world problems, both large and small (which is what we see, and can now actually

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[3] Again, TE includes insufficient materials, knowledge, and action in their diagnosis
as well, but this is not the specific focus of this paper.

understand!, in TE's diagnostic frame).

This diagnosis especially gains believability when one considers the destructive power of *cycles of negatively skewed interactions* (Young, 2005). For example (by now you know how much I love my examples!), your husband doesn't do his dishes. Because of low levels of mind-more-wise, you can't help but interact with him in a mean way. Because your husband also has low levels of mind-more-wise, he is overwhelmed by the suffering that your mean actions cause him, unable to think of alternative modes of interaction, and is thus forced to abstain from doing his dishes tomorrow night. Because you have low levels of mind-more-wise, his action forces you to yet again interact with him in a mean way, which causes him to... Over large amounts of time and vast spaces, billions of negatively skewed interactions - *or even worse, such negative interaction cycles* - result in divorce, community feuds, and even world war and genocide.

What happens if you patch up a cloth made of weak fibers? Your cloth won't last that long because you are not addressing an underlying and all pervading issue. If TE's diagnosis is correct, if all world problems have their root in negatively skewed actions and action cycles, any long-term solution to our world's problems must address small time/space scales. If you are not taking into account the small time/space scales, you are simply patching up a cloth made of weak fiber and you will surely see more holes emerging in your cloth soon.

TE's diagnosis of our world's problems is thus inherently 'scalar' in nature. Specifically, TE draws attention to the small time/space scale causes of large time/space scale problems. Yet another critique of popular scalar discourse! Most

people think large problems have large causes; "they miss the trees because they only look at the forest" (Young, 2005). As TE trumpets the importance of billions of tiny causes in their scalar diagnostic frame, they are certainly "challenging existing power relations" and reconfiguring "the relative importance of different scales" (Leitner 2007, 159).

Part V: my thoughts; a unified theory of positive social change

I think the way in which TE connects the scales of sensory experience, individuals, interpersonal relationships, and eventually the entire world is accurate. However, if you explain this idea to most people, they either crack up or you loose serious amounts of respect. This is horrible. This means that most people cannot accurately identify the incredibly simple root cause of all of humanities problems. Yes, geographers - and social scientists, more broadly - have done a *great* job learning how to analyze situations and solve problems at local, region, and global scales. And yes, psychologists, psychiatrists, and less world-oriented meditation teachers have figured out how to analyze and solve problems at the scales of sensory experience, individual bodies, and interpersonal relationships. But are the social scientists and psychologists talking to one another? Perhaps marginally, but not enough! Our current theories of social change (liberalism, conservatism, socialism, etc.) and individual change (psychology, meditation etc.) are disjointed; they are not unified. Because theories of social change and individual change are not unified, the two processes do not directly support one another; their chorus is dissonant.

But imagine the harmony. *Mindfulness teachers and social scientists learn from one another and together, create a theory of positive change that is simultaneously applied at all scales.* Psycho-spiritual development provides the foundation upon which broader social change is built. For example, because of increased community levels of mind-more-wise, community-wide friendship increases and community-wide friction decreases. All of a sudden you need less disciplinary police! Or, instead of community feuds, community harvest festivals come back into fashion!

Similarly, large-scale infrastructure, governance, education, justice system etc. utilize mind-more-wise *and embody their importance.* For example, boards of directors and politicians take part in team building and goal setting exercises before important meetings, children learn about 'see in,' 'hear in,' and 'feel in' (i.e. learn about the sensory experiences that comprise 'self') while they learn their ABCs, you don't go to jail, you go to a community service and psycho-spiritual development center. Psycho-spiritual development strengthens the fibers of societal cloth. Larger-scale social changes mend gapping holes. Both process – *while operating at drastically different scales* – engage with and support one another. Psycho-spiritual development is constantly seeing how well individuals can literally *embody* social change. Similarly, social science is constantly seeing how much society can utilize, encourage, and express mind-more-wise.

I have a strong feeling that social science and psycho-spirituality will merge in the near future. My grand children will laugh at me when I tell them that I learned social science with out learning about mindfulness and that I learned about the psyche with out considering how improving individual cognitive habits can, over a long time, vast space, and billions of individuals, drastically affect social norms. I have a feeling that my grand children will be well acquainted with a *unified theory of social change.*

Lastly, how does this conversation of scale, SSP, mind-more-wise, and social change relate to the effect of noting 'Gones' (as discussed on pages 16-18)? As you know, as a practitioner notes 'Gones,' he/she becomes more identified with the experience of "Gones"/"the source of [their] consciousness"/"the source of

everyone's consciousness"/"the Formless Womb of creation" and less identified with self and world (as they become "fleeting figures") (Young 2011, 97). One can view this experience/transition as a radical, perhaps the ultimate, shift in one's identity and sense of belonging. The practitioner goes from identifying with self, to identifying with the source, spirit, the nature of nature, god, what ever you want to call it.

First of all, although noting gone is an especially effective tactic in the pursuit of radically shifting one's identity, it is not the only meditative technique that produces this effect. Most mindfulness exercises, in fact, will produce this effect.

So, chew on this: how does becoming more identified with 'the source of everyone's consciousness' relate to our ability to "[call] into question the generality and normative function of any positionality" (Leitner 2005, 163)?

Hmm.

I'd say that these are two ways of describing the exact same process; two ways of describing psycho-spiritual development. If you remember, mindfulness allowed us to "[call] into question the generality and normative function of any positionality" (Leitner 2005, 163); it allowed us to *detach* from inappropriate mini-SSPs. Wait a second, who is detaching? If its not the Toby who is overwhelmed by anxiety or the John who is overwhelmed with frustration, who the hell is detaching?! You know who. Its that seed of awareness within our consciousness that we can never put into words. Pure being; pure perception. Sounds pretty amorphous, perhaps even

devine. I think the essence that is detaching from inappropriate mini-SSPs is "the source of [one's] consciousness"/"the source of everyone's consciousness"/"the Formless Womb of creation"/ Spirit/ The nature of nature, God, Fun, Honesty, Truth, what ever you want to call it/him/her/we/me/you/them...

A world-full of people who understand that they are *not* frustration when they are frustrated, that they are *not* anxiety when they are anxious, is a world-full of people who understand and are connected to their true-selves, to the seed of the devine that lives happily in our awareness. A world-full of such people (or, one could say, dieties!) is a social scientist's dream! You mean people will hold more than then their egos in mind when they act?! They'll be able to act from a place of morality and wisdom?! They'll like, have the bigger picture in mind all the time?! Wowzers!! As a social scientist, I would be more than happy to work with such a population; I can surely think of great systems for wealth distribution, resource management, education, justice, etc.!!

Mind-more-wise marries perfectly with the *much needed* radical social change that social scientists dream of. In fact, *mind-more-wise is the secret ingredient that is necessary for the success of such social change*. With out it, social scientists would eternally toil away, patching up one hole only to find more holes appearing elsewhere in their weak societal cloth. Psychologists and meditation teachers know how to make strong cloth! Let's work together! I'll make strong cloth, you mend gapping holes, before we know it, we'll have harmonious, sustainable communities! *Such a unified theory of positive social change incorporates understandings from, and utilizes tactics at, a variety of scales.* It therefore has the power to radically

transform human civilization. Or, as Young likes to say, such a marriage will bring "the dawn of a new age of human awareness" (2012). If we, as humans, aspire to "produce knowledge not only for its own sake but more for its practical usefulness in changing the world for the better," we just gotta encourage the marriage (Myers 2011, 27).

Conclusion

In this paper, I have explored the ways in which RMT, NSM, and Framing illuminate TE as an SMO. I have also explored many of TE's ideas and their relationship to Leitner's definitions of SSP and scale. Lastly, I discussed some of my thoughts relating TE's ideas, the affects of noting gone, and social science. May this work 'change the world for the better.'

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